

China the EU and the restructuring global governance

Closing Speech

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have been given the honour of closing this conference on “China, the European Union and the Restructuring of Global Governance”, which has brought together scholars, high level experts and key players from different continents to discuss the major challenges faced by the global community in this period of crisis. These challenges which can only be addresses with the support of all the major actors on the international scene.

During this conference all aspects relevant to understanding European and Chinese views on the restructuring of global governance have been covered.

We have taken into consideration trade and investment relations between the two partners as well as with third countries, such as on the Africa continent.

We have discussed the different European, Chinese and American visions of the reform of the global financial and monetary systems.

We have focused on the challenge of securing energy supplies to fuel our economies while, at the same time, greening our economies and tackling climate change, which seriously threatens the sustainability of our growth.

We have analyzed different security scenarios in an emerging multi-polar global order.

I am sure that at the end of this conference you have come up with a lot of ideas, interesting insights and a better understanding of all these issues.

Let me just add few final remarks.

China’s rise is one the main changes in the contemporary world.

Despite a dramatic economic development, internal social differences greatly increased and China, in several aspects, remains a poor country. Chinese development has also turned out to be disruptive for Chinese domestic natural environment. Greening its economy is one of the major challenges that China is facing.

It is exactly this double Chinese identity, at the same time as a great power and a developing country, which makes particularly problematic defining its role in global governance structures.

It is therefore crucial to discuss how China will influence the governance of the world of the 21st century, and how global governance structures will be adjusted in order to recognize China's increasing role at the global level. The Chinese case also plays as a testing ground for the inclusion of other emerging actors in these same international forums.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The continuous opening of China enables both Chinese and European to discover more about each other cultures. Despite the fact that we are living in an ever more interdependent world, the Chinese and the Europeans still know too little about each other. Too many studies on EU-China relations are still biased by this lack of mutual understanding. In a period of financial, economic and social crisis, this knowledge gap might increase protectionist temptations, serious misunderstanding and unnecessary tensions. During its recent speech at Tsingua University (30/04/2010) the president of the EU commission Barroso repeatedly emphasized the role of intercultural mutual understanding "as a defining feature of the 21st century".

For this reason, events like the one that we are attending today, which gathers together participants from Europe, China and the rest of the world, are important attempts of closing this knowledge gap.

I therefore hope that our Institutes for European studies, jointly with the Inbev Baillet Latour chairs, the KULeuven, the College of Europe and the Madariaga foundation will continue working together, with the aim of promoting a better understanding of the European and Chinese actorships in the evolving global order.

I would finally conclude expressing my deep gratitude to our many chairs, panelists, moderators, the organizing staff and our sponsors, but also you, the participants. Everyone contributed to the success of this symposium. Thank you for doing such a great job and special thanks to the European Economic and Social Committee for the generous hospitality.

Thank you for joining us here in Brussels and safe travels home.